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“New Technologies and the Rise of Political Liberty”

Abstract: In the area of information and communications technology (ICT), the emphasis is usually placed upon economic and social benefits. While those benefits are very significant, Ambassador Gross focuses upon the impact that these new technologies are having on the rise of freedom and political liberty around the world. Ambassador Gross analyzes the dramatic, long-term positive consequences and challenges that these developments are creating for people everywhere. In addition, Ambassador Gross discusses related issues associated with Internet governance, including those resulting from the recent UN "heads of state" World Summit on the Information Society.

Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much. It is a great honor to be here. Let me first thank Richard Owens and the Faculty of Law for inviting me to serve as this year's Grafstein lecturer. Being here in Toronto today reminds me of the advertisement promoting Canadian tourism that was on U.S. television when I was growing up – “friendly, familiar, foreign, and near.” Thank you very much for the warm welcome to Canada.

20 years ago, the U.S. Government realized that telecommunications was the wave of the future and that this sector was not only critical to our own economic future, but also to U.S. foreign policy. As U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy, I cover not only a portfolio of traditional international telecommunications issues, but also cover broadly all other aspects of international communications and information policy.

I manage a section of the State Department with offices devoted to our multilateral telecommunications policy work with international organizations, our bilateral work with other countries, and work addressing communications policy aspects of investments, security, satellite, and undersea communications.

Today, governments and citizens face an almost bewildering variety of new information and communications technologies or ICTs – one acronym that I hope you will let me slip into this talk. The impact of these ICTs has brought both startling opportunities and challenges.

The heart of today's talk is "New Technologies and the Rise of Political Liberty," because that really encapsulates the *raison d'être* for my work.

Let's consider the following question in our discussion this afternoon: How do these new communications technologies affect our shared goals of promoting the growth of freedom and democracy around the world? U.S. journalist David Broder, of the *Washington Post*, said "Technology is the servant, not the master, of change." As we look at these communications technologies, it is important for us to remember that as freedom-loving people we should use these advanced technologies for the betterment of everyone. This brings me to the critically important concept of transformational diplomacy.

Transformational Diplomacy

During her confirmation hearing, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice explained her view of "transformational diplomacy" and the foreign diplomacy role of the U.S. State Department. She said:

"We must use American diplomacy to help create a balance of power in the world that favors freedom."

"This time of global transformation calls for transformational diplomacy."

Simply put, we cannot afford to leave the world as we have found it. Instead, we must create possibilities for change by putting our values into practice, leveraging the power of ideas and taking difficult decisions for freedom.

In a speech at Georgetown University this past month, Secretary Rice emphasized that a transformed U.S. diplomatic effort would not be one-sided. She said:

"I would define the objective of transformational diplomacy this way: To work with our many partners around the world to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people – and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system . . . Transformational diplomacy is rooted in partnership, not paternalism – in doing things with other people, not for them. We seek to use America's diplomatic power to help foreign citizens to better their own lives, and to build their own nations, and to transform their own futures . . ."

Our work in the area of International Communications and Information Policy is very much a vital, and, I think, an essential component of such transformational diplomacy. As we have seen during the past few years, ICTs are a critically important tool for transforming our world.

The Growth of Information and Communications Technology

As you are aware, when people talk about the important role that ICTs play in the world, the emphasis is usually first and foremost on the economic benefits of technology, such as the remarkable increases in productivity and other economic benefits.

The worldwide telecom market is, as you know, enormous. In 2004, the industry generated revenues of US\$2.1 trillion. By the end of 2008 the worldwide telecom market is expected to surpass US \$3 trillion.

Driven by technical changes, the deployment of wireless networks, the Internet – including broadband, and other innovative communications technologies – have expanded dramatically during the past few years all across the world. The growth of the Internet and wireless services has been particularly dramatic. For example,

- The number of wireless subscribers worldwide exceeds 2 billion.
- The number of Internet subscribers worldwide is more than 1 billion, with the fastest percentage growth in Africa and the Middle East.

Economic Benefits of ICT

This spread, and use of the Internet, wireless telephony, and other innovative technologies, has created new economic opportunities and contributed to GDP (gross domestic product) growth in ways that we never could have imagined just a few short years ago. Countries around the globe can thank the Internet and these other technologies for hundreds of thousands – if not millions – of new jobs.

The economic benefits from the dramatic increases in the use of ICTs in countries such as Canada and the United States are well known. But more importantly, the results of the explosive growth of using ICTs worldwide for other countries, especially in the developing world, are even more fundamental to their future growth. For example:

China: Currently, China – a country that I will discuss in more detail in a few moments – has the world’s largest number of landline and mobile telecommunications subscribers, including remarkably 363 million cell phone subscribers (more than the entire populations of the United States and Canada combined!) and a 27.6% penetration rate. China estimates that by the end of this year there will be more than 820 million total telephone subscribers, up from 748 million in 2005. Chinese telecom carriers expect to generate revenues of more than \$86 billion in 2006. These are large and impressive numbers.

Just last week, China reported that its Internet population, already the world’s second largest after the United States, had risen to 111 million, representing a growth of 17 million people in just the last year. Furthermore, China said that the number of people with broadband Internet access had risen by more than 50% to 64 million. Some experts predict that the number of Internet users in China could reach 750 million in just the next few decades. However, as I will discuss in a minute, we should all recognize that despite the growing number of internet users, internet censorship limits democratization because it prevents Chinese citizens from having access to a variety of sources of information and the freedom to discuss these matters. For example, the Chinese government blocks certain foreign news sites, websites which call for greater Chinese government accountability and the sites of human rights organizations critical of China.

India: India has long been concerned about its poor telephone infrastructure and its lack of foreign investment. Because of recent, dramatic changes made to Indian law and policies, the growth of telephone and Internet services in India has blossomed. Now, more than 10% of Indians own phones with a combined subscriber base for fixed lines and mobile phones of more than 120 million. The total number of mobile phones in India now stands at more than 77 million and is growing at more than 3.5 million each month. It is estimated that India will have about 250 million telephones by next year. Interestingly, there are only about 7 million Internet subscribers in India, although that number is beginning to grow quickly.

Africa: Sub-Saharan Africa is a fascinating but little discussed region when it comes to using technology. It is at once very challenging – because of the traditionally low teledensity rates – but it also has shown some of the greatest promise and performance during the past two to three years. The challenges are to create an enabling environment that draws in direct investment. It is now widely recognized that telephony is a private sector enterprise, not a governmental enterprise. The challenge from a governmental and regulatory perspective is what

can and should be done to create an environment to encourage investment, both domestic and foreign, by the private sector. Because of recent positive changes that are creating an enabling environment in many African countries, Africa now boasts the fastest growth rate in the world for both wireless telephony and the Internet, with forecasts that the continent will add 265 million new mobile subscribers over the next six years.

Studies on Economic Growth and Technology

Let me shift now to note some interesting studies that show the correlation between economic growth and technology.

Some of you may have read about a groundbreaking study on the relationship between economic growth and mobile phones conducted by Leonard Waverman, Meloria Meschi, and the University of Toronto's own, Melvyn Fuss. The study was reported in *The Economist*:

“Overall the study’s model suggests that in a typical developing country, an increase in 10 mobile phones per 100 people boosts GDP (gross domestic product) growth by 0.6 percentage points. *The Economist*, March 12, 2005, *Economic Focus*, *Calling Across the Digital Divide*.

We expect to continue to see the substantial positive economic impact of mobile telephony in places such as Africa and we were encouraged that the study recognized the fundamental fact that mobile telephony is “being rolled out at a faster rate in developing countries than developed ones – closing the digital divide.” A similar, but methodologically different, study of the economic impact of mobile services on Latin America, conducted by David Lewin and Susan Sweet of Ovum, found that “in middle income countries, such as those of Latin America, increasing mobile penetration by 10% boosts GDP growth by 0.3% per year.” The authors found this to be a “very significant increase in countries where overall national GDP is growing at only 1.5% per year.”

It is important to recognize the vital importance of the economic growth and progress that comes from increased use of ICTs, especially in developing countries. We have, of course, come a long way from the famous statement made in the 1980s by Nobel prize-winning economist Robert Solow that “computers are everywhere except in the productivity statistics.” It is well understood that, as recently stated by our new Chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, the most important economic development in the United States in the past decade has been the sustained increase in the rate of growth of labor productivity, or output

per hour of work. That increase, in turn, has been a result of a variety of factors, particularly rapid technological progress and increased investment in new ICTs during the 1990s.

We are seeing the same impact, albeit to varying degrees, in countries around the world. The importance of these developments cannot be easily overstated, as economists agree that, in the long run, productivity growth is the principal source of improvements in living standards. Thus, simply stated, increasing use of ICTs brings increased productivity to countries around the world, thereby allowing – at least potentially – for increases in the standards of living for people in both the developed and developing worlds. As we will discuss in a moment, there is an important political dimension to this as well, since there appears to be a correlation between an expanding middle class and increasing expectations and demands for political liberty and freedom.

Social Benefits of ICT

The promise of the Internet is not fulfilled just by economic growth alone. The true fulfillment of the Internet is realized only by the opportunity these technologies offer all nations and all people to pursue educational, cultural, political, medical, scientific, and commercial achievements. And this is happening. The social benefits of increased use of ICTs are very well known, especially in the areas of e-government, e-learning, e-health and the like. Their importance and their abundance were highlighted at both WSIS phases. Let me note two examples of innovative uses that you might not have heard about.

A web-based e-procurement system implemented in Romania in March 2002, which has increased government efficiency, reduced their government's vulnerability to corruption, and improved fiscal responsibility in government procurement. According to the Romanian Government, the system has saved the budget over €100 million so far.

In many developing world countries the financial and banking sectors have been unable or unwilling to serve the poor – thereby making the cycle of poverty even harder to escape. In South Africa, one of the largest banks launched a new cell phone banking system geared toward low-income users to bring banking and e-commerce to rural and underserved South Africans, particularly those who do not live near a bank or who cannot afford the sometimes exorbitant charges, and to

give them the ability to make electronic payment at businesses throughout South Africa. It will make it easier for the government and businesses to pay their employees. If the venture works, the hope is to extend it beyond South Africa's borders to the rest of the continent. We continue to encourage the development of such “digital opportunities.”

The creation of Internet search engines, online data bases, online digital libraries, and e-government services transformed our access to information, our lives, our work and play. I could, if given the time and access to the Internet, give you extraordinary examples of the transformational, positive impact that telephones, especially cell phones, and the Internet are having on peoples’ lives, particularly in the developing world.

Political Benefits of ICT

But while the economic and social benefits of ICT for people throughout the world are remarkable, I want to focus on a different benefit that comes from the spread of these new technologies – the benefit these new technologies bring to freedom and political liberty around the world – and the rise of political liberty.

Famously, there was John Perry Barlow’s Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace, published in 1996, that stated, in part, “We are creating a world where anyone, anywhere may express his or her beliefs, no matter how singular, without fear of being coerced into silence or conformity.” That view quickly proved to be wrong. Of course, that view is still wrong. But, because that naïve view became outdated so quickly, people assumed that the Internet and other new forms of communications were not really having a major impact on the political process – at least to advance liberty and democracy. Fortunately, that limited view has turned out to also be wrong.

Looking back to the early 1970’s, there were approximately 30 democracies in the world. As President Bush stated in his State of the Union address last week, there are now 122 electoral democracies in the world today. In fact, President Bush stated in 2003 that:

"Historians will note that in many nations, the advance of markets and free enterprise helped to create a middle class that was confident enough to demand their own rights. They will point to the role of technology in frustrating censorship and central control – and marvel at the power of instant communications to spread the truth, the news, and courage across borders."

President Bush also noted, as have many others, that these conditions allowed the world to experience, in a little over a generation's time, the swiftest advance of freedom in the past 2,500 years. Certainly, free speech, effective rule of law, and free and fair elections, are also all necessary components of democracy. It is my contention, though, that information and communications technology is a primary engine for global economic growth and the free flow of information that spurs the rise in political liberty.

Satellite Technology: Let's start with the pre-Internet world of the 1960's. As early as 1961, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 1721, stating that global satellite communications should be made available to all nations on a non-discriminatory basis. The following August, President Kennedy signed the Communications Satellite Act with the goal of establishing a satellite system in cooperation with other nations. Although international commercial satellite services began in the 1960's, it was not until 1971 when the international treaty creating Intelsat was signed and satellite services were soon made available to more than a hundred countries around the world. The creation of Intelsat was done explicitly to provide both economic growth and the free flow of information to potential democracies in the developing world. Now we take this heavenly system of communications satellites for granted!

Fiber Optic Technology: Satellite technology was not the only new technology that was changing the face of communications during this time. The introduction of the first trans-Atlantic fiber optic cable, TAT-8 in 1988, was significant because it dramatically increased transmission capacity as compared to earlier generations of cables and cut costs by 95%. Successive fiber optic cables have transited other oceans, expanded the quality of service and significantly increased capacity, while the price of investment has dropped at an astounding rate. The cost per circuit dropped from US\$1 million in 1956 to US\$310 in 2003. A decline of more than 99.9%

What does such increased capacity and dramatic lowering of costs mean in the real world? While both satellite and fiber optic technology brought the world closer together with virtually instantaneous communications, its primary impact was the incredible drop in the price of telephone calls and television transmission. In the U.S., for example, the average end user charge per minute of international telephone service went from US\$1.34 in 1980 to US\$.21 in 2003, a drop of 84%.

In Russia, where ten years ago it cost US\$4.00 per minute to make an international call, now it costs four cents a minute.

Decline in the Statist Paradigm: This, in turn, resulted in an explosive increase in international calls – in other words, families, friends, businesses and news organizations could talk with each other and share information of every sort. With the introduction of wireless phones in the 1980s, particularly the 1990's and in this decade, more than 2 billion people have telephone service – many for the first time. The unexpected and unprecedented increase in conductivity has meant that direct information flows could – and have – occurred in ways never before imagined. While technology was changing, things did not stand still on the regulatory side of the communications revolution either. In the U.S., we had the divestiture of AT&T in 1984. It was a significant milestone in terms of changing both the mindset and the law regarding the United States communications industry. In 1987, the European Union began its trek down its deregulatory path with its Telecommunications Green Paper on the development of a common market in telecommunications equipment and services. By the time the Uruguay Trade Round was in full swing in the 1990s, negotiations began in 1994 to open up basic telecommunications markets to competition with the signing of the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Basic Telecommunications Services that went into effect in 1998.

These legal and regulatory changes meant that the traditional statist control of communications, both telephony and mass media, was no longer the dominant paradigm. Instead, we began seeing the empowerment of citizens around the world with the private provisioning of services through competitive companies.

A nagging holdover from the earlier monopoly era has been the continued governmental ownership of some telecommunications companies. Progress advanced in many countries. For instance, an already privatized British Telecom saw the removal of Her Majesty's Government's golden share in order to fully divest the government of its last shred of control. Unfortunately, I am sorry to say, there are some countries who still insist on some government control, which limits economic growth and prosperity in those countries. Nevertheless, the legal environment for the telecommunications industry in virtually all parts of the world has been liberalized. This fact is perhaps best illustrated by the ITU's statistic that there are now well more than 100 countries with independent telecom regulators. So, during the last quarter century we have seen technology lead to extraordinary declines in telecommunications costs and, with liberalization, a remarkable

explosion in the number and availability of communications devices and services, especially in the developing world.

Technology and Political Liberty

But how have these advanced technologies that we are discussing today actually increased political liberty?

Let me give you some examples:

China: An example of the importance of technology in the context of people wanting to be free was the Tiananmen Square protest by Chinese students in 1989. First, the outside world was able to immediately learn about what was going on in Tiananmen Square, that is until the Chinese Government pulled the plug on television newscast transmissions. Then telephones let students know the reaction of the outside world, helped them communicate with their families, and even connected the Chinese leaders to each other. Once the television broadcasts were stopped, telephones, e-mail and particularly faxes were used to continue to transmit information to the rest of the world. A lasting effect of all of this was that it showed the Chinese Government that these technologies were something to be reckoned with.

Ukraine: The cell phone has been credited with having been a pivotal component in the success of the famous Orange Revolution that took place in Ukraine in 2004. “Smart-mobbing” resulted from Kiev’s college students SMSing each other and telling them to meet in Independence Square and bring along their friends.

Uganda: In a conversation I had about two weeks ago with a senior Ugandan official, we discussed how cell phones were encouraging political discussion. He said Uganda had just two radio stations ten years ago and now they have about 140. Talk radio is very popular and listeners frequently call in on their cell phones to offer their opinion. He pointed out that some of the radio operators were not making money, but that they went to great expense just to have a voice on the airwaves. While radio has been a political tool and a means to disseminate information for many years, now cell phones are enabling Ugandans to more easily share their opinions and engage in regular **national** political discussion. This is, in part, because Uganda increased its teledensity rate by a factor of twenty-five times in the past 7 years. The same story of the impact of combining radio broadcasts with mobile phones is true in Kenya and other countries across Africa.

Mozambique: Cell phone text messaging played a pivotal role in Mozambique’s recent elections, alerting voters to a candidate who engaged in improper conduct

that led to his expulsion from government service in the 1980s. The SMSs even included the issue number of the official government gazette announcing the expulsion and reportedly contributed to the candidate's defeat.

Saudi Arabia: In Saudi Arabia, the number of cell phone users has grown exponentially and political groups and candidates were able to capitalize on this telecom modernization by using text messaging as a campaign tool.

The Jeddah elections were unique in that women were allowed to run for the first time. Text messaging also provided women with an additional medium for campaigning without the usual social restrictions, which often limit women's access to audiences.

Iraq: Turning to Iraq, according to an ABC News poll conducted in November 2005, 62% of Iraqi households have cell phones compared to just 6% in early 2004. In a country where access to phone lines and communication was limited to a select few under Saddam Hussein and where there were no cell phones, now there are more than 4 million cell phones.

President Bush called the Iraqi elections this past December, "a landmark day in the history of liberty." Cell phones helped relay a vital message – to those who were reluctant to leave the safety of their homes – that the voting centers were safe and secure. And the world saw a larger than anticipated turn-out.

Here too, text messaging was used as a campaign tool. It is amazing to see the rapid adoption of new technology and its creative use, such as the SMS campaigning, to advance the cause of freedom in a place such as Iraq.

Afghanistan: Afghanistan is a country where under the rule of the Taliban the Internet was outlawed, and very few had phone service. And, to make an international call, most citizens had to leave the country. Today, there are a million mobile phones in Afghanistan and you can walk into one of many cafés in Kabul and get on the Internet. The two largest cell phone companies in the country have invested over \$240 million. Given its geographic location, and its limited production of domestic goods, Afghanistan has long been known for its role in regional trade and for its people's entrepreneurial spirit. The free market and the establishment of a democratic government have fueled the growth of telecommunications. As Afghanistan's lines of communication continue to grow and connect with the rest of the world, we expect greater growth, a greater trade

role for Afghanistan in the region, and we expect to see the reemergence of the traditional entrepreneurial spirit of the Afghan people.

The political aspects of blogs is worthy of an entire lecture. But, as Ethan Zuckerman of Harvard Law School's Berman Center for Internet and Society, has stated, "Not only do blogs provide an alternative space for free speech in countries where the press may not be independent, free or strong, they also enable people in Africa to challenge media representations in the U.S. and Europe."

While the Internet and ICTs are being used increasingly for political purposes and have expanded political and personal liberty's toolbox, the concept of free flow of information is still being challenged today and it has recently been a matter of very public international debate.

Along these lines, let me mention China again concerning a critical issue that is currently in the news: censorship. As we know, China has made great strides in its economic development, but the Chinese leadership has drawn a line in an attempt to separate economic reform from political debates. That line is an illusion. Interfering with the free-flow of ideas over the Internet does not break the resolve of political dissidents. Instead, it limits China's economic potential at a time when – as the PRC claims – it wants to foster indigenous innovation fueled by increased foreign investment.

China's information control practices undermine human innovation, limiting the sharing of ideas, and violate fundamental human rights. They hamper research and development and entrepreneurship because the best minds work best when they are free to express themselves on the subjects they choose.

These same information control practices worry foreign investors because they want top level Chinese employees who can communicate openly not just about production problems, but about politics and social values. International companies require access to the same Internet information at their overseas offices that they have available in their home countries. Companies want to be able to encrypt important information coming into and going out of overseas offices without having to share the keys with government watchdogs.

Capital markets care, too. They need to have confidence that information about Chinese industries, markets, and society is complete – not self-censored or filtered by the government. If China is going to reach its economic potential as a full partner with the rest of the world, it needs to bring its Internet and communications

policies into line with the business conditions that foreign investors face in the most developed markets. As the Chinese markets mature, foreign investors will see an increasing economic cost to government restrictions on information flows.

World Summit on the Information Society

This leads us to a discussion of a major multilateral event in which the United States, Canada, and more than 170 other nations participated where the free flow of information was directly challenged. It was the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which took place in two phases. Phase I was held in Geneva in December of 2003 and Phase II followed in Tunis in November of 2005.

The countries gathered at Phase I reached agreement on a document reaffirming the fundamental principles for building the Information Society in the new Millennium. One of the key factors recognized in building the Information Society was "the ability for all to access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge" as an essential element to foster inclusiveness.

Article 4 of the 2003 World Summit's Declaration of Principles stated the following:

“We reaffirm, as an essential foundation of the Information Society, and as outlined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; that this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. Communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and the foundation of all social organization. It is central to the Information Society. Everyone, everywhere should have the opportunity to participate and no one should be excluded from the benefits the Information Society offers.”

I do not believe that it's an accident that we have more democracies now in the world than ever before at the same time that information is able to flow more freely. More people have access to information than ever before, which empowers people, and the access helps support and encourage democracies around the world.

Information and communications technology, including the Internet do not operate in a vacuum. The Internet serves as a conduit for transmitting information. It is vital that the Internet remains a neutral medium open to all. We believe that it is

the appropriate role of governments to ensure that this freedom of expression is available to its citizens and not to stand in the way of people seeking to send and receive information across the Internet.

A country that does not support freedom of expression and that regards censorship as more important than informed citizenship will never win the full trust of its trade partners.

A country that invests its resources in manipulating and restricting the flow of unflattering information will ultimately witness its policies fail, but only after it has squandered the economic potential of millions of its citizens.

We challenge the leadership of nations to take their commitments to market reforms to the next level:

- Dismantle the Great Firewall and, instead, build economic opportunity over a free and open Internet.
- Unleash the intellectual power of your people for the good of your country and also for the world.
- Invest in the free communication of ideas and reap the dividend of development sustained by the human spirit.

The United States supports the results of the WSIS and is pleased that the world reached consensus on fundamental aspects of ICT for development, including the important issues of financing and Internet governance.

One of the key results of the WSIS was to clearly identify the nexus between technology and freedom. We should not lose sight of the linkage between our fundamental policy goals of free flow of information, freedom of expression, and the important technical aspects of this medium.

As we look ahead to the complex future of the Internet, it is increasingly important that we understand fully the political implications of what seem to be very technical issues.

We saw this nexus on full display at the WSIS where some countries focused a great deal of attention on the Internet Domain Name System, arguing that greater oversight and control by governments was necessary.

We appreciate the recognition by Canada that the current system associated with ICANN works well, and that change must be made incrementally in existing organizations and not involve the creation of yet another intergovernmental organization. Canada, as well as other countries, recognized that the Internet has become an essential element of this country's and the world's social and economic development and so recognized the stability provided by the current system.

Ultimately, WSIS concluded that the current Internet system is working well and that international cooperation (by this we mean cooperation by all stakeholders, not just governments) should continue through existing institutions, whether it be the ITU, the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) or other existing organizations. This is an extremely positive outcome that sends a message to the world and to business that the Internet is essential and it will continue to operate in a stable, secure fashion. It should not be weighted down by increased government bureaucracy or political wrangling.

The WSIS in Tunis explicitly endorsed the previous position taken in Geneva in 2003 that information flow should be free on the Internet. I've already used this unanimous adoption of close to 200 countries to call out countries not adhering to these principles. It gives me an arrow in my diplomatic quiver that I didn't have before. Now, I'm not naïve for I know that those countries censoring information on the Internet are not going to stop just because I ask them to do it. But they should do it because it is right for their people and necessary for the long term prosperity and development of their countries.

It also was fundamentally important that Tunis endorsed an enabling environment – the rule of law and private sector leadership, thereby permitting the continued economic growth stemming from the digital revolution.

Finally, WSIS through its Tunis Agenda document, has asked the UN Secretary-General, in an open and inclusive process, to convene a meeting of a new informal forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue – called the Internet Governance Forum or IGF.

Looking Ahead at the Post-WSIS Environment

As we look ahead to the post-WSIS environment, we are encouraged by the opportunities before us to really tackle the issues of the Information Society. The IGF, if done properly, offers an occasion for Internet experts, governmental officials, industry representatives and international organizations to come together to face some of the very real challenges facing us in this information age.

Clearly, WSIS emphasized the importance of cooperation among all stakeholders in the information society. From financing to capacity building, cybersecurity to Internet governance, no one group can “go it alone” - international cooperation is essential in all of these areas. But the WSIS also recognized that a wide range of existing international, regional and domestic organizations are undertaking critical tasks in these areas. Ultimately, **all** of these organizations must contribute to an environment that facilitates cooperation and information exchange.

At the forefront of the U.S. position, as we think about issues of the Internet and its management, is our broad commitment to a secure, sustainable Internet that fosters freedom, economic and social development. It is extremely positive that the WSIS affirmed these principles and we look forward to working with our partners in government, the private sector and civil society to implement them in a way that allows the Internet to grow and flourish around the globe.

Challenges remain

The core reason for the two-phase World Summit remains: That is, how to share the benefits of information and communications technologies with the developing world. To do this, the United States, Canada, Europe, and other developed countries need to work closely together to ensure that developing countries create suitable environments for allowing information technology to flourish and freedom to be shared by everyone.

Back in 1986, Secretary of State George Schultz said in a speech in Paris on the Information Age the following:

“Any nation that wants to profit from the information revolution must understand where innovation comes from. . . . Innovation – and risk taking – are more than ever the engines of progress and success. . . . So the challenge of economic success in this new age is, in large part, a challenge to the individual entrepreneur.” He went on to state that “the free nations of the world are best positioned to meet this challenge. By their very nature, they guarantee the individual freedom that is necessary to the entrepreneurial spirit. And they have the confidence in their citizenry to encourage, rather than stifle, technological development.”

I see that innovation and risk taking resulting from the free flow of information. This sharing of information will have a liberating effect on all the people of the world – on all of us.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of Phase Two of the World Summit on the Information Society last year, the resulting document, entitled the “Tunis Commitment,” once again reaffirmed the earlier commitments of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Phase One of the World Summit, and further stated,

“We recognize that freedom of expression and the free flow of information, ideas, and knowledge, are essential for the Information Society and beneficial to development.”

We must ensure that those are not hollow words, but have real meaning and are carried out by all of us: governments, universities, and everyone who has a stake in this process. We all must continue to make progress to protect personal liberties, to protect political liberty and to ensure that information and communications technologies continue to enable the world’s citizens to enjoy greater economic well-being, to live happier, healthier lives, and to live in liberty and freedom.

Thank you.